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INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 ABU DHABI 003370

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STATE FOR S/CT, EB/ESC/IEC, INR/EC, DS/ITA, PM/PPA, NEA/ARPI
NSC FOR FTOWNSEND, MMALVESTI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/20/2016

TAGS: [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [EPET](#) [ENRG](#) [PINR](#) [KHLS](#) [AE](#)

SUBJECT: UAE CRISIS MANAGEMENT: MOVING FORWARD INCH BY INCH

REF: A. 2005 ABU DHABI 3243

[B](#). IIR 6 931 0011 06

[C](#). ABU DHABI 2445

Classified By: CDA Martin Quinn for reasons 1.4 b and d.

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. Recognizing that the UAE lacks unified crisis response capabilities, the UAE leadership initiated a plan to develop a national crisis management system over a year ago. However implementation of the plan is moving forward at a glacial pace, and UAE authorities continue to develop separately and independently their own crisis management structures that are not necessarily interoperable.

In addition, a private UAE company has plans to launch a National Crisis Management Training Center, but this venture is in the very beginning stages. Until there is a national plan for integrated emergency response for all military, police, and emergency services, the UAE will remain ill-prepared to respond effectively to a significant crisis. End summary.

National Emergency Management Agency: In Theory Only

[1](#)2. (S) Influential Abu Dhabi Crown Prince and Deputy Supreme Commander of UAE Armed Forces Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan (MbZ) has been the driving force behind the UAE's efforts to create a unified crisis management structure. At his urging, the UAE Ministry of Presidential Affairs contracted with Raytheon Corporation in early 2005 to design a strategy for developing and operating a crisis management structure (ref A). In the study, Raytheon proposed that the UAE establish a National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) to oversee a National Crisis Management Center and three regional Emergency Response Centers (in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and the northern emirates). The vision is that NEMA will coordinate all UAE federal and emirate-level authorities responsible for responding to a crisis, and it will develop a unified command and control structure (ref B).

[1](#)3. (S) Since the study's completion in the fall of 2005 little tangible progress has been made on implementing it. In April, Raytheon briefed the UAE's key decision-makers on the study. In attendance were President Khalifa, Vice President/Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum (MbR), Deputy Prime Minister Hamdan bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, the federal State Security Director, and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Interior, and Presidential Affairs (all brothers of President Khalifa). Bob Lunday (protect), Vice President of Raytheon Middle East, told econoff that MbZ wanted MbR's support, because as Vice President he would be able to allocate federal funds for the

project. "Without MBR's buy-in, this would be an Abu Dhabi-only venture," Lunday said. According to Lunday, MBR recognized the need to implement a crisis management structure and agreed to the proposal. "Now we are just waiting on the UAE to allocate the funds," said Lunday.

14. (S) In June, the UAE took the first step to implementing this plan by announcing the establishment of a National Security Council (NSC) (ref C). The NSC is comprised of the senior UAEG leaders involved in security matters (the same members who were present at the April Raytheon briefing). It will be responsible for developing a national security strategic plan -- a key component of which is the establishment of NEMA. The next steps for the NSC are to select a National Security Advisor and allocate funds to establish NEMA, but individuals familiar with the project do not anticipate that either will happen until the fall. The NSC must then determine the organizational structure of NEMA, select its staff, and select sites for the National Crisis Management Center and three Emergency Response Centers.

Crisis Management: Everyone's on the Bandwagon

15. (C) As the bureaucratic process for establishing NEMA and the National Crisis Management Center move forward slowly, individual UAE agencies continue to establish their own crisis management systems and centers. In fact, just weeks after the announcement of the NSC, Dubai announced it would be forming its own Crisis and Disaster Management Team that will be chaired by Dubai's Police Chief, Lieutenant General Dhahi Khalfan Tamim. Contacts within the Dubai Police department say that this team will lash up with the federal system, once it is in place. The federal Ministry of

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Interior also has its own crisis management team. This team, led by Brigadier Ahmed Nasser Al-Raisi, General Director of the Ministry of Interior's Central Operations Department, is comprised of 50 first responders trained in rescue operations. According to Al-Raisi, "The Ministry of Interior is the lead organization tasked with responding to any crisis in the country, and other elements -- like the military -- should get involved only when asked."

16. (C) Elements of the UAE military continue to improve and upgrade their own crisis management centers, but not in an integrated manner. The Air Force's Operations Center and the Navy's Maritime Control Center are each being upgraded with the intention of eventually feeding into the National Crisis Management Center. The UAE's Special Operations Command is also building a crisis management center that will feed into the national system. However, equipment for each center is being purchased piece-meal and is not necessarily interoperable.

17. (C) Additionally, the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) is nearing completion of its own crisis management center. Nick Glover, the Crisis Management Team Leader for the UAE's Supreme Petroleum Council, gave econoff a tour of the brand new facility, located in ADNOC headquarters. This crisis management center will have the latest technology and it will link up all of ADNOC's operating companies, refineries, and facilities using WebEOC (a web-based emergency management communications system). Glover said that he is hopeful that the National Crisis Management Center will also adopt WebEOC as its interface, but he said that the ADNOC leadership (in particular, ADNOC CEO Yousef bin Omeir) decided ADNOC could not risk waiting for the federal system to be implemented at some unspecified point in the future.

18. (C) In addition to needing a coordinated national crisis management system so that each agency will know its role and responsibilities, there are technical reasons for implementing such a structure. For example, the

communications systems used by the Ministry of Interior still are not interoperable with military communications or with ADNOC's crisis response teams. All three entities are independently considering investing in TETRA secure communications system, but this is not a decision that they are coordinating together.

Disaster Management Training Center: Nascent Idea

¶9. (C) A key element of having a unified crisis response plan is ensuring that the first responders are adequately -- and symmetrically -- trained. The plan for NEMA does not specifically include a training component; however, a private UAE company Tadreeb (translated "training") has partnered with the UAE Offsets Group to launch a National Disaster Management Training Center in Abu Dhabi. This training center would be a corporate, for-profit venture, and it will provide crisis management training to the range of first responders (police, military, firefighters, healthcare workers, public works officials, etc). The training center's programs will include Command, Planning, Operations, Logistics/Equipment, and Finance/Administration.

¶10. (C) Thus far, this venture is in the concept stage. In July, Dr. Adel Al-Shamry of Tadreeb brought trainers from the University of Georgia's Center for Mass Destruction Defense and the University of Texas' Southwestern Medical Center to Abu Dhabi to conduct a National Disaster Life Support course for 40 health care professionals. Dr. Al-Shamry told econoff he viewed this training as a "pilot program" in order to gauge UAE interest. Tadreeb now wants to reach out to other U.S. crisis management training programs to see if any could provide a "train the trainer" program to an eventual Tadreeb training staff. It was apparent during the meeting with econoff that Dr. Al-Shamry and officials from Offsets were not coordinating this project as a part of the UAE's efforts to establish a National Emergency Management Agency. As Offsets is part of the UAEG, econoff encouraged them to approach NEMA once its director is announced.

Comment

¶11. (C) Each of the individual agencies understands the importance of being prepared to respond to a crisis, and they are all implementing their own efforts. However, until the national crisis management structure is fully in place, the

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UAE will remain ill-prepared to respond effectively to a significant crisis.
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